

nobling sentiments: likewise of his natty attire, with low-crowned hat which he is continually twirling, and spotless white ducks eternally being "hitched." Such characters, if ever they existed, are of the past, and the present knows them not: though we have lately been amused at seeing on the wharf an innovation (indeed a revolution) in several instances of a sailor in full dress—

not adopting the same view as the Feejee Islander, whose ant D'Ossy notion of full evening costume consisted in a shirt-collar and a pair of straps—but with a showy gold brooch in the shirt front, decidedly tight pants, and hair as if fresh from the skill of some river *coiffeur*.

It is always an unmarcious task to break through a pleasing delusion, but the poorer truth is told the better, and we unhesitatingly say that it would be impossible to find any other body of men equally numerous, in whatever capacity, so ignorant and unintelligent, and so totally risen up in all kinds of sensuality and low indol-

gences, as are the great body of the men before the mast. We know from experience how difficult it is, in a sweeping censure of a class, to avoid unintentionally wounding the feelings of such as happen to find themselves among a body indicated as in the present instance: but we must leave it to the good sense of such as these, who are at least as well aware of the facts as ourselves to see that we are compelled to speak of the prevailing rule, and in doing so to speak of the facts, and to be so disgraced from an exposure of grievances and abuses because there are a minority to whom our remarks will not justly apply.

To illustrate our position as to the ignorance, want of intelligence, helplessness, and addition to the lowest pleasures observable in seamen, let us suppose the arrival of a vessel from a distant voyage—India, China, or California, for instance. No sooner does such craft Quarantine ground than she is boarded by runners from the various seamen's boarding houses, and unless the sailor happens to

most casual, he is induced to accompany these "loungers" to their "hotel," situated in the lowest part of the town; the worst of those near the East River being in Water and Cherry-sts. and their vicinity—the "East North River" in Washington-st., although they may be found scattered pretty thickly throughout all the streets at all near the shipping. From the moment the victim first sets his foot in any of these dens, till his forced departure, he is systematically plucked by the proprietors of these respectable abodes for a variety of small and discreet distinct and well-contrived conventional services, and his pocket is very difficult to obtain access to the sleeping apartments they provide, but description by a former inhabitant of one of them by no means conveys the ideas that they would ever beget in the mind of a stranger, who might be induced to enter for the "bridal chamber" at any of our large hotels; indeed, of the two, they would probably rather remind one of a manger. But, as, for the more effectual means of carrying out the nefarious system of the landlord, a bar is attached to most of these places, it is impossible to exclude a small number of the most profligate and dissipated men, computing in the interests of the proprietors to

general, though the impunity with which their practices have hitherto been tolerated, has perhaps tended to make them forgetful of the possibility that public attention might by such means be attracted to them and their transactions.

We have recently visited several of the bars connected with the sailors' boarding-houses in various parts of the town, and a description of any one of them would serve for all. Situated in the lowest districts, frequently down in basements, in rooms apparently never intended for the purpose, they are usually open from early morning till many hours after midnight, surrounded by men dressed generally in a costume denoting the wearer either to be a sailor or following some one of the numerous callings which a seaport town calls into existence. All degrees of intoxication may there be studied,

the scenes being even tragi-comic. After intensely drunk or tipsy, they sleep off the effects of their previous potations. Then a third table one or two joining parties are seated, the only dispute at first being as to who shall "stand drinks round," each insisting on his own privilege to do so. The harmony with which these "entertainments" commence is generally of short duration, only lasting till the maddening liquor with which the customers are supplied begins to have an influence, and the frequent quarrels which occur too often terminate in a manner leading to an announcement in the public journals of "Another Fatal Affair in a Porter-House," and the matter ends usually by the fac-

Any place, afloat or ashore, seems with many to be considered good enough for a sailor—but the cramped, dark, dirty, unventilated forecastles of some of the old vessels are not so bad as the lodgings provided for him ashore, without the advantage of the fine bracing sea-air and the habits of temperance necessarily enforced at sea. Some of the vilest and filthiest sites appear to have

light and fresh air being quite favorable spots with the landlords; and this villainous accommodation, and worse food and drink, if possible, is provided at a cost somewhat more extravagant than would be paid at respectable city

hotels—a fact perfectly well known to merchants and ship-owners, though perhaps hardly credible to such as have no acquaintance with the subject. The method adopted is very simple and highly effective. As soon as the runners have introduced the sailor to his boarding-house he is at once well soaked with liquor, and kept in a state of entire or partial intoxication till he is shipped. On his arrival ashore previous to getting paid off, he is generally quite out of cash, and the generous lander advances him a few dollars and gives him an unlimited liquor credit. When a settlement is made by

the owners the landlord contrives to get possession of the whole of the wages, sometimes under the plea of the debts contracted, but more frequently at the request of the sailor himself, who, in order to obtain his discharge, is obliged to take charge of it, which the landlord very effectually does. In some instances the form of keeping an account is gone through, but in such cases that method of book-keeping, popularly known as the double-chalk system, differing fundamentally from the Italian, being a kind of double entry unrecognized by good accountants, is the most generally adopted, but in the majority of cases a still more unimproved method: Jack draws from the sailors a certain sum, called a "share," and he pays them, for his gratification ashore, his board and lodging supplied him, and is allowed uncontrolled sway over the various barrels of

poison in the cellars for his own use and to "treat" his friends till the landlord, thinking he has now had enough for his money, tells him he has overdrawn his account, makes him very drunk, and again ships him on board an outward-bound vessel, making a further profit by that transaction, in a way we shall hereafter show. It is impossible to magnify the villainy of this system, nor is there any need, for it speaks for itself. These men who, in the words of one of themselves, have "to do the work of an elephant upon the keep and lodging of a pig," are perhaps the most hard-worked of any class to be seen, toiling long hours in the sweat of the

chance was to let all experience seem lost upon them, and an antiquated proverb suggesting that they "earn their money" "like horses and spend it like asses," is as applicable to the present race as to that for which it was written. Those men who have been absent on a long cruise, often have to draw as much as \$120, due to them for services, and yet this sum, which they are to put to their credit on account, is frequently squandered in the course of a month. Some men are spending money, and in these few weeks the same man is put aboard another vessel, laborously drunk, a beggar, without even change of clothes—a month's advance already expended, and all his property vested in a shabby red shirt, and a bundle of tobacco under his

arm! Such instances are of daily occurrence, and bad as this is for the men themselves, their credulity and ignorance are frequently visited with still more severity on their families, who look to them for support. An illustration may be found in a circumstance that came to our knowledge quite accidentally, and is no doubt one of many yet more distressing: We met a young fellow, who, by the way, had originally run away from home and gone to sea, who had been absent on a long cruise of over two years, and who had nearly \$200 due to him. He was a young man, of fair education, and by no means deficient in intelligence. According to his story, he intended on

being paid, to visit his father, a man much advanced in years, and in needy circumstances, and deposit the balance of his earnings for his use. He, however, had unfortunately got decayed into one of these boarding-houses, and though not generally addicted to habits of intemperance, declares he was not, during the whole of his stay there, of about three weeks, allowed to get sober. At the end of that time the landlord informed him that his money was all spent, and all remembrance was useless and redress unattainable. To add to his embarrassments he was presented with a certificate of his debauchery, and a woman, a low, vulgar, and dissipated creature, who, under the name of Windy Arundal, had been introduced to him by the

prostitute, with whom he was living, although he declares solemnly he has not the least idea of her age, legal condition, and must have been intoxicated at the time. These drunken marriages are said to be common; and the change in his condition from being zealous to the responsibilities of wedded life, did not seem to affect him, but his grief and shame on account of this aged partner was so distressing, as he by a note contrived to have written to assure his father of his expected arrival, and authorized him to contract debts to a certain amount on his credit, which he was now unable to pay.

Such is a glance at the position of some of our sailors. We shall shortly resume the subject, showing what steps have been taken to protect them, and how far success in their operation.